

PRESS RELEASE

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The Online Welcome Desk: helping international students and researchers prepare their academic stay in France

The Online Welcome Desk is a platform which helps international students, PhD candidates and researchers to generate a personalised roadmap of the administrative steps they need to carry out to prepare their stay in France simply and efficiently. The platform is the result of an online tool first developed by Université Paris-Saclay in 2017, the E-International Welcome Office, and a platform belonging to the Université Numérique d'Île-de-France (UNIF). The new platform is now up and running and is currently being shared with interested French higher education institutions.

Previously known as the E-International Welcome Office, the Online Welcome Desk is the first step in the process of welcoming international students, PhD candidates and researchers to the university. The online tool was first created by Université Paris-Saclay, and later shared and developed by the Paris region higher education digital planning organisation, the [Université Numérique d'Île-de-France](#) (UNIF). The platform supports international students and researchers by offering them a personalised roadmap of the steps they need to take before and upon arrival in France, according to their personal situation, ranging from visas and permits to health insurance, accommodation, banking, and more. The platform is currently available in French and English and will soon be available in Chinese.

The platform uses a secure and reliable database of regulatory information capable of identifying the individual administrative journey of an international student, PhD candidate or researcher in a particular area. The tool includes an interactive map which highlights the services surrounding the university (accommodation, transport, administrations, etc.).

Available 24/7, the platform provides answers to the most frequently asked questions, as well as more personalised responses. Not only does the tool help international students and researchers prepare for their arrival with total peace of mind, but it also simplifies numerous repetitive tasks carried out by international welcome staff, so that they can dedicate more time to providing more personalised support.

Sharing the tool with UNIF will allow a larger number of international students, PhD candidates and researchers to benefit from the initiative and help them to prepare fully for their arrival in France with complete peace of mind, reinforcing the region's appeal and attractiveness for the international community. UNIF's involvement has also enhanced the platform in several areas, including reinforced legal monitoring and improved interoperability, thanks to the association Science Accueil and the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris (CIUP). The platform also includes an interactive map, complete with resources and information from regional partners (CROUS student welfare offices, transport, etc.).

Higher education institutions have the possibility of personalising the platform, both in terms of visual identity and content, allowing institutions to promote their own local international welcome initiatives. For example, the Université Paris-Saclay platform includes a section on "Health Insurance", featuring initiatives carried out by the university's Student Health Service, as well as a "Welcome to France" section, with information on French as a Foreign Language (FLE) classes and the Paris-Saclay GATE welcome desk.

Explore the Université Paris-Saclay Online Welcome Desk:
<https://www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en/onlinewelcomedesk>

ABOUT UNIVERSITÉ PARIS-SACLAY

Université Paris-Saclay was born from the shared ambition of French universities, *grandes écoles* and national research organisations. As a leading university in Europe and the world, it covers the fields of science and engineering, life sciences and health, and humanities and social sciences. The university's science policy closely intertwines research and innovation, incorporating both basic and applied science to tackle major societal challenges. Université Paris-Saclay offers a varied range of undergraduate to doctorate level degrees, including programmes with its *grandes écoles*, all of which are focused on achieving student success and employability. The university prepares students for an ever-changing world where the ability to think critically, remain agile and renew one's skills are crucial. Université Paris-Saclay also offers a comprehensive range of lifelong learning courses. Located to the south of Paris, the university extends across a vast and rich local area. Its location strengthens both its international visibility and its close ties with its socio-economic partners (major companies, SMEs, start-ups, local authorities, charities).

www.universite-paris-saclay.fr/en



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